



THE BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST.

A SERMON

PREACHED AT MARGARET CHAPEL,

ON THE FEAST OF S. PETER, 1845.

BY THE

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TO
THE CONGREGATION
OF MARGARET CHAPEL,

WITH WHOM HE HAS OFTEN IN COMMON WORSHIPPED,
TO WHOM HE HAS, FROM TIME TO TIME, WITH JOY MINISTERED,
AND WITH THEM, IN THEIR DEVOUT SERVICES,
FOUND REST AND JOY,

THIS SERMON,

PREACHED, BY GOD'S MERCY, TO REMOVE ANXIETIES,
ON A DAY OF GLADNESS,
AND THE EVE OF HEAVY SORROW,
IS INSCRIBED,

WITH THE AFFECTIONATE PRAYER,
THAT THE GOD OF ALL COMFORT
WILL, IN OUR COMMON SORROW, COMFORT THEM,
AND HIMSELF, THE TEACHER AND GUIDE OF ALL,
REPLACE THE GUIDANCE AND TEACHING
OF WHICH IN HIS INSCRUTABLE PROVIDENCE
HE HAS PERMITTED THEM TO BE DEPRIVED.



S. MATT. xii. 31.

Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

ANXIOUS and awful is at any time the office of speaking of the Divine mysteries. For "the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." And how should we, with so little portion of His Spirit, venture into such depths? How must we not dread by any words of ours to take from the depth of such deep solemn warning as this! How can we hope so to draw out from the very depths of the Divine mercy and justice, whereby He pardoneth the penitent and yet leaveth some impenitent at last in their hardness of heart, such a tempered teaching, as may neither "sadden the hearts which God hath not made sad," nor yet lower our thoughts of the awfulness of His Majesty! Truly "the well is deep," and we have "nothing to draw with," and "a great stone lieth upon" it, unless He, the True Jacob, roll it away for us, and give us to drink of the living water, even the Spirit of Truth.

And yet would we be silent, how may not these words press heavily on tender consciences; nay, perhaps scarcely any can have heard words so awful

and not have said at some time, "Lord, is it I?" perhaps scarce any have not at some time longed to know that they are free from guilt so hopeless. Not in one way do these terrible thoughts come, but sometimes brought by the voice of conscience, sometimes as a suggestion of despair from the evil one, most often perhaps, when they take any deep hold, as a mercifully severe warning against the approaches to sins, which are the forerunners of the unpardonable sin, even as the thunders and lightnings and thick cloud upon Mount Sinai were a warning to Israel lest it should break through and perish. And perhaps in one of these ways the doubt as to the nature of this sin has perplexed some even of us. Not of my own choice, if I may so say, have I been led to speak on a subject so awful and of such great difficulty, and so I may the rather hope from His mercy, Whose Providence, as I trust, brought me to it, and through your prayers for yourselves and for each other, that what I may say may neither sadden any faithful heart, nor yet withdraw any healthful fear. For God both within and without does impress very awful fears upon our souls; in the history of the Bible and in those around us, and on our own consciences, in His sudden visitations or enduring chastisements of sin; in the awful change in the soul following upon a single sin, the sudden falls of those who once seemed faithful, the strange mystery that some who began to live in that "faith which worketh by love," and lived for a while faithfully and

righteously, were not removed before they fell into the sin in which they died^a.

It has been then ever with great reverence and awe that the holy fathers ever spoke of this very solemn subject. S. Augustine^b, although he had "often knocked and sought and asked," long avoided to speak of it, until at last a special call seemed to invite him; S. Athanasius^c, when enquired of, shrunk once and again from answering, fearing lest, "although immersing his mind into it, and beginning to search deeply, he should not be able to draw forth the deep meaning which lay therein. At last he essayed, having first much prayed the Lord, Who sat upon the well and walked upon the water." And thus although, of ourselves, it were rather fitting that we should be silent altogether, the mercy of the Lord enables us to tell you, how they whom He had so instructed, understood His words.

First then it may be said, what the sin is not. It cannot be any sin from which men ever have repented; for wherever God has given repentance, He has given pardon; no sin, then, which has ever been repented of, is the unpardonable sin. And yet what very awful and exceeding sins have been pardoned or might have been pardoned! We know that Cain was "of the wicked one and slew his brother;" but that first fratricide was not yet hopeless, since God

^a S. Aug. de Dono Persev.

^b Serm. ad Pop. 71. ed. Ben. (21. Oxf. Tr.) §. 8.

^c Ep. iv. ad Serap. 8.

still graciously pleaded with him, and thereby opened to him, as to Adam, the door of repentance, asking him, "Where is Abel thy brother?" It was not closed, until he finally desponded of God's mercy. Manasseh "made his son to pass through the fire," "did wickedly above the" very "Amorites," "seduced" the people of God "to do more evil than did the nations whom the Lord had destroyed before" them, "shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another;" "the Lord spake unto" him, yet he "would not hearken^d." But "when he was in affliction he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers and prayed unto Him, and He was intreated of him." The exceeding sinfulness of Manasseh seems recorded only to shew the still more exceeding long-suffering of God. Not even the shedding of innocent blood "which the Lord hateth," not the seducing of His people, not even obstinate impenitence *for a time*, were as yet the unpardonable sin. Simon Magus sinned grievously against the Holy Ghost, wishing with money to "purchase the Gift of God," that he might make merchandise of It. We know that at the last he repented not, the first among the seducers of the brethren, and that he perished by an awful death, at the prayer of the Apostles of this day, through the sudden judgment of God. Yet perilous as his state even then was, repentance was still open, since S. Peter

^d 2 Kings xxi. 2 Chron. xxxiii.

bade him, "Repent of this thy wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee." How have even eminent saints been set forth as examples of recovery from very grievous sin! For a year David slumbered on after his two exceeding sins; and what sins in one so early called, so long preserved, blessed so exceedingly, by whose lips the Holy Ghost had spoken! And yet, awakened at the Prophet's piercing rebuke, deep as were his after chastisements, deeper his heart's inward grief, scarce had the confession burst forth from his heart, but he was forgiven. And of the two chief Apostles, whose birth-day we this day celebrate and their entrance into the joy of their Lord, S. Paul says that, before grace, he was "a blasphemer," blasphemed the very Name of Christ whereby alone he could be saved, and "caused" those who were His, "to blaspheme." Not after the fulness of grace was S. Peter's fall, yet after what nearness to our Lord! After he had beheld His glory, and been with Him in the Holy Mount, had been "eyewitness of His Majesty, when He received from God The Father honour and glory," had "heard the Voice from Heaven, from the excellent glory, 'This is My Beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased,'" yea, had himself seen His Eternal Birth of the Father, revealed to Him by The Father, been pronounced "blessed," been taken into Himself, as, through his confession, the rock in the Rock, the foundation in that Foundation,

which is Himself, had received the keys of Heaven, he denied his Lord, the Saviour of all, Whom he had before confessed, “with Whom” he had “per-severed in His temptations,” the chosen witness of His Agony and humiliation as before of His unspeakable Glory, Whose Body and Blood^d he had received; “no light,” says a father, “but a very exceeding sin;” such a sin that, when it was committed, not at the voice of a little maid, but wrung through the force of very exceeding tortures, seemed^f to have some shadow of the unpardonable sin. The very Crucifixion of our Lord shut not out repentance, not of the people only, but of their very rulers, who moved them to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. Some mitigating plea to God’s mercy there was even for them; “I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers;” even for them was our Lord’s prayer heard, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” “The Blood^g Which phrenzied they shed, believing they drank.” The robber who blasphemed and repented was the first-fruits of the Redemption. What seems more direct blasphemy against God the Holy Ghost, than to deny Him to be God? and yet heretics who have so blasphemed Him have in multitudes (a father^h says) repented and been restored. So great is the

^d S. Chrys. Hom. i. de Pœnit. §. 3.

^e Id. Ib. Hom. iii.

^f S. Cypr. Ep. 16. §. 2. Oxf. Tr.

^g S. Aug. Sermon. 67. §. 4. et passim.

^h S. Chrys. see also S. Aug. Sermon. 71. §. 5. 6.

loving-kindness of our God, so does the lofty all-encircling Heaven of His love enfold us and all the sins, which we commit beneath, within, against, It.

Then, further, for ourselves, no course even of sin, no act of deadly sin, following even upon a course of sin, if it admits the pang of penitence, shuts out from pardon. What is really dead, feels not. No *past* sin hinders from penitence. "Remark," says a fatherⁱ, "all the sins which God threatens; thou wilt at once see that they are *present* sins." Feel thou thyself dry, seared, impenitent, without feeling, stupified, bewildered, yea, if any were harassed with the spectres of former sins, so that all holy truth at times came before him as a dream, and he could himself scarcely tell what he believed, or whether he believed at all, or did he as the sad heritage of his sin seem to himself abandoned as it were to Satan, his very dwelling-place, left of God and "the cage of every unclean and hateful bird," unable to distinguish whether blasphemous or impure or rebellious or hateful or hopeless thoughts be of his own mind, or the darts of the evil one driven through him,—be this or all beside which can be imagined miserable, be he from head to foot covered with the ulcers of his sins, so that he seem to himself all one wound, unbound, unclosed, unsoftened, a very living death; yet if he have any longing to be delivered from the body of this death, if out of this deep he can but cry, though not in words yet

ⁱ S. Pacian, Ep. iii. §. 34. Oxf. Tr.

by the agony of the heart, "Lord, save me, I perish," he has not committed the unpardonable sin. The faintest longing to love is love ; the very dread to miss for ever the Face of God is love ; the very terror at that dreadful state where none can love, is love. As yet those around may say, "Lord, he stinketh ;" the heavy stone of earthly sins may lie very heavy upon him, and he lie motionless, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, so that he cannot even approach unto Jesus, and his eyes wrapped round that he should not see Him, yet He Whom he cannot seek, may yet, at the prayer of the friends of Christ, seek *him* ; that Voice which awakeneth the dead can reach him yet, and he may hear the Voice of the Son of God, and, hearing, live. The smouldering flax may seem extinct, yet if there be this one spark left, He can again kindle it into a burning flame, glowing with His love.

And now, to approach the sacred text itself. Every step is full of awe, when we speak of man's sinfulness and God's overwhelming love. Yet ye are, we trust, in earnest, my brethren, and would hear of God's mercies, only to magnify His love towards you, and kindle that zeal for all such as, outcasts in man's sight, may yet be brought with you to praise Him, through Whose grace alone it is, that any are not even as they. How should not every part of that mercy be full of mystery and beyond all thought, stretching out into infinity every way, in length and breadth and depth and height, infinite

as His love, whereby God became Man to win His rebellious and fallen creatures from death to life, from hatefulness to His love? And here, because Satan would ever tempt to despair of God's mercy those whom he has tempted through presuming upon it to sin, our Good Lord accompanies the awful sentence on that one sin which hath no forgiveness, with the largest, almost boundless, assurance of mercy on all besides. As if (if we may so speak reverently) His infinite love, hemmed in on this one side by that which could not receive it, poured itself forth the more abundantly wherever It could be received. There is perhaps no where else in Holy Scripture so large a declaration of God's forgiveness, as here where mention is made of the one sin which finally shuts it out. "I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men," or in part still more emphatically in S. Mark, "all blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme." Ye know, my brethren, what very awful blasphemies against our Blessed Lord's sacred Person the Gospels relate; so awful are they, that we may well shrink from naming them to you and wounding your ears, save when Holy Scripture itself recites them, or ye would meditate on them in awe at His love; yet all, He says with such loving solemnity, "*I say unto you,*" all shall be forgiven. He against Whom they were uttered, He Who hath power to forgive sin, He the Righteous Judge of quick and dead, Himself says, "all shall be forgiven." And

not these only, but since in that woe, there is no mention of “sins”—for He says, “All sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven,” but He says, “the blasphemy” only, not “sin” against the Holy Ghost—then even sins, committed directly against God the Holy Ghost, are not excepted; and yet more, not even all blasphemies against that Holy Being are unpardonable; for He says, “*the* blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.” So then, while all else, even blasphemies against His very Majesty, are forgiven, one sort only of exceeding malignity, “*the* blasphemy” above all others, is retained. Sin indeed against the Holy Ghost has the more awful character, from His very nearness to us. “Undivided¹ indeed is the Holy and Blessed and Perfect Trinity,” and “He^m Who hath the Image of The Son, that is, The Spirit, hath through It The Son also and The Father Who is in Him,” and “in Himⁿ when He cometh, is the full Presence of both the Father and the Son.” Yet since it is the Holy Ghost Who in Holy Scripture is declared to be the especial Indweller of the human heart, since He is the seal through Whom God impresses upon us His likeness, He dwelleth in us as His temple, in His Substance, and is thereby the very Author and Principle of our sanctification^o, sin against Him, in ourselves or others, has in it a more awful deadliness. And yet of *sin* against the Holy Ghost there is no

¹ S. Ath. c. Serap. iv. 12.

ⁿ S. Ambr. de Sp. S. i. 10.

^m S. Cyr. Thes. l. 33. p. 336.

^o See Pet. de Trin. 7. 13. 21.

mention here ; and, even further, we seem permitted to explain the larger expressions of S. Mark and S. Luke, “ he that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost,” by the more restrained words in S. Matthew, “ *the* blasphemy against the Holy Ghost ;” so that the meaning of all should be exactly the same, “ he that blasphemeth with *the* especial blasphemy.” For, in God’s mercy, we know that persons who have very grievously blasphemed, denying His Very Being and Godhead, have had the gift of repentance and forgiveness. And so again we seem allowed to follow the great body of authority, who think that S. Mark’s words, “ Because they said, He hath an unclean Spirit,” assign not the occasion only that our Lord so spake, but the meaning of His words. As S. Athanasius says^p, “ The Saviour when before He rebuked them for many sins—yet exhorted them to repent ; but when they said, ‘ He casteth out devils by Beelzebub,’ He speaketh of this no longer as a sin, but as blasphemy so great, that on those who dared this, punishment must come, without escape or pardon.” The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost was then not one sort of guilt, but many in one ; it was the guilt of those, who had the very Presence of their Lord, who witnessed His Love and Holiness, who saw the Power of God, but out of envy and malice, obstinately resisted the light, and ascribed that which was the very working of the Spirit of holiness to the “ unclean spirit.” And

this sin was in its very nature unpardonable, not because God would not pardon it upon repentance, but because it cut off repentance from itself, turning into sin the very miracles of mercy which should have drawn it to repentance. It was a fruit of such desperate malice, as blinded itself wholly. And yet more exceedingly does the mercy of God exceed our iniquity, if (as fathers of great name have thought) our Lord, in these words, pronounced not their sentence, but still warned them of a sin yet to come, should they still resist the further witness of the Spirit, when the stumbling-block of the humiliation of His Humanity should be withdrawn, and He, from the Right Hand of The Father, should send down the promised Comforter to testify of Him; more marvellous yet, if some even of those who had so blasphemed had repentance unto life.

Such then being, according to what may be called a concurrent sense in the Church, the strict nature of the unpardonable sin, was it limited to the time of our Lord's Presence in the flesh, or the fullest Presence of His Spirit in the Church? Could it only be committed in an age of miracles, in the brightest lustre of the Divine light, against the Very Light Himself, and are those of this day wholly free from all peril of it? This can scarcely be; for it can hardly be thought that so very solemn a warning of our Lord, which has by the Holy Ghost been recorded for us in three Gospels, should relate wholly to a past sin, and not

* S. Chrys. ad loc. Hom. 41. §. 3.

in any way belong to us also. The outward form of sin ever varies and shifts; its inward evil principle remains the same. In this sin, the decayed core and substance of the sin was, an impenitent hatred and opposition to the truth, out of envy of Him Who is the Truth, and of those who received It; its final form to attribute the evident work of God, Who Alone is good, to the evil one. The more awful both the sin and the punishment, the more must one withhold one's thought as to any individual; for to think that it has been committed is to think that that person is now in hell. And yet when they, by whom the Holy Ghost spake, condemn an individual without any offer of pardon, it does seem that they were given to foresee that the wickedness was so great and impenitent as to shut out pardon. When at last, upon Alexander, who had "put away a good conscience," "made shipwreck of the faith," and "greatly withstood the Apostles' words," S. Paul pronounces the sentence, "the Lord reward him according to his works," it sounds like the final sentence of Him Who says, "Whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." Such seems also the sin of Elymas the sorcerer, whom S. Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost, stedfastly gazing upon and seeing his inmost self, pronounced "the child of the devil, the enemy of all righteousness." And when, in later times, God has, on the prayer of the Church, suddenly brought to a fearful end, profane mockers and opposers of His truth, as Simon Magus and Julian and Arius, there

is again an awful feeling, that theirs had been the unpardoned, unpardonable, sin. Nor less in the dreadful sayings of infidels almost of our own days, when we have seen blasphemy follow upon blasphemy, and dreadful, bitter, hatred of Him Whom they blasphemed, and final impenitence has set its miserable seal upon them.

But this is still wholly removed from us; God in His mercy grant that every shadow of this sin, every avenue and approach to it, may ever be far from every one of us! Still, as no one ever fell at once into extreme sin, our only safeguard from any is to be kept by God's protection from the first steps of the descent to it. And of some sins, akin in guilt to this, S. John seems to speak, sins not unpardonable, yet for which it is very difficult to obtain pardon, when, encouraging to pray for all beside, with the full assurance that "God will give" us "life for them that sin not unto death," He does not give the same confidence in praying for these. "There is sin unto death; I do not say that he should pray for it." i. e. There are sins so ordinarily leading unto death, so deadly in themselves, which but for some special measure of the long-suffering love of God, must end in death, "I cannot," the Apostle says, "so bid you pray for it." He forbids not prayer, he shuts not out hope, "yea let him groan," says a holy man^a, "that loveth him. Let him not presume to pray, nor cease to weep. Doth not

^a S. Bern. de grad. humil. c. ult.

faith at times obtain whereon prayer presumeth not?" And this is no longer that aggravated blasphemy, proceeding from manifold evils joined in one; it is "sin;" different from that blasphemy, but not, as it, restrained to one kind only, nor yet named, that we might the more take heed of all grievous sin.

Yet nearer to us still; a common consent of the Church has marked out six several sins as forerunners of the unpardonable sin, which some of us have been accustomed to pray against with our good Bp. Andrewes^r, "Be merciful, be merciful, spare us, pity us, O Lord, and destroy us not for ever; deliver and save us. Let it not be, O Lord, and that it be not, take from us, O Lord"—and then among other grievous sins, the holy Bishop prays earnestly against these, despair after sinning, presuming upon God's mercy, impenitence for past sin, obstinate purpose to continue in sin, impugning known truth, envy of grace in a brother. For these all involve the rejection of those means whereby God would in His goodness recall us from sin, the hope of His mercy, the fear of His judgments, the piercing sting of past sin, the sense of its unprofitableness, the restraint of His truth, the loveliness of His holiness, as seen in others, if not felt in ourselves. They flagrantly resist the pleadings of God's Good Spirit, are direct offences against His goodness and His love.

And yet as ye start back, my brethren, from these completed sinful tempers, ye bear witness that,

^r Litany, p. 80. in Tract. 88.

through the mercy of God, no one fell at once into extreme sin. As "the path of the righteous shineth more and more unto the perfect day" of righteousness in God, so the way of the wicked sinketh, mostly, by slow descent, into thickened darkness. Thin perhaps as the spider's web are the single sins which twine around the sinner, until they bind as a cable. Who cannot trace his bitterest sins to the petty unrepented faults of childhood? And when any have but for a time repented and afterwards gone back, not all at once, mostly, but slowly, one by one, have the practices of penitence, more watchful heed, rules of life, fences against sin, restraints on self, being laid aside by those unhappy beings whose "last state is worse than the first." Not at one blow, can men mostly cast off fear and love; not at once does He Whose "delight it is to be with the sons of men," Who "would have all men to be saved," in that He died for all, withdraw His life-giving Presence from the soul.

Whereto then should this awful warning of our Lord, loving (we must well know) in its very awfulness, tend in us? Not assuredly to make us dread, lest we have committed the unpardonable sin. Such a thought, we may boldly say, bold through the mercy of our God, is but a temptation of Satan. To fear lest we have committed it or have been near committing it, is a proof that we have not yet committed it. We see in the Gospels how they who are the types of it, went on unchecked from one wickedness to

another; how the rebukes of the loving Saviour incensed them, His acts of love increased their hatred. There is no pause, no misgiving, no faltering in their sin. Mercy and love harden them the more, as though impenitence had been the very proper fruit of love. When our Lord performs an act of healing, "*straightway* they take counsel against Him to put Him to death;" they have not the compunctions of a heathen judge; nothing diverts, nothing moves, nothing startles them; they go on, as blind men insensible of any hindrance; the suggestions of Nicodemus, the expostulation of the blind man healed, the witness of their own servants, "never man spake as this man," the testimony of John, the love of the multitude, the works of the Father, His wisdom, their own shame, all which could arrest their course, is cast aside. How could they be healed, whose disease grew through the very means of its healing, His works of power and His love? We have not sinned away all grace, if we have the grace left to fear. Nor again is the end of this warning to make us fear or think of others. "Judge nothing before the time," says the Apostle. Who knows whether any now seemingly impenitent, may not yet be touched by the melting grace of God, may not, at the touch, start into life, and, much forgiven, love much, sorrow much, love more than we?

Rather, for us is this fearful picture of completed disease given, that we may shun the very slightest taint and touch of its infecting breath. Is it a

fearful thought, one already dead though alive; a dead soul within a living body; speaking, acting, thinking, in all the human powers of the mind, but dead by an unseen, unknown death; untouched by love, unreached by fear, unconscious of its own death; alive to things outward, to time and sense, to pleasure and vanity and ambition, but dead within, through the loss of God, its life; quickening, informing, directing the motions of the body, itself cold, lifeless, motionless to good—is this well-nigh the most appalling thought we can now picture, oh flee we then with the more anxious haste the slightest approval to an end so dreadful. “Tender and delicate,” it has been said[†], “is the Spirit of God.” Harken we to His lowest whispers; obey we His Voice, “for My Name is in Him;” dread we every approach of every sin, which may lead to final impenitence, and the quenching of the life and grace of God. “Beware,” says a holy writer, “lest any think things small, in how small things soever he be found knowingly to offend. Let no man say in his heart, ‘these are slight things; I care not to correct them; it is no great thing, if I continue in these so venial and so slight sins.’” “This,” adds St. Bernard[‡], “dearly beloved, is impenitence, this,” (he means, when matured into its full ripeness of final obduracy,) “this is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, blasphemy unpardonable.”

[†] Tert. de Spect. §. 15. p. 205. Oxf. Tr.

[‡] Serm. in Conv. S. Pauli, §. 5.

Rather as in those who are sinking down the course of sin, or in some degree, perhaps, in ourselves formerly, sin gradually enlarged into greater sin, so let us trace the course backwards. Let us not be content with checking the overt sin, but trace out every root of it, to pluck it up. Since self-love produces emulation, and emulation envy at God's grace in another, and envy at God's grace, denial and disbelief in it, and this again hardness of heart and final impenitence, stop we not, until we have got back to its first root. Deadly it is to impugn known truth, let us shrink from knowing no evil, however painful, which we but suspect in ourselves; impenitence is deadly, never let us entertain for a moment the thought of any pleasurable in any past sin, and if it arise, meet we it with thoughts of loathing, and of the misery of having offended God, arise we instantly on our falls, bear no delay, confess and seek our Saviour's healing Face; deadly is envy at a brother's grace, beware we, how we suspect graces not akin to any thing in ourselves: how we dwell on seeming faults of the good, impute inferior motives, suspect that any are secretly such

“ From that blasphemy wherewith the Pharisees blasphemed, on whom that judgment was laid, it is plain that he also now blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, who ascribes to the adversary the operations and fruits of the Holy Ghost, which befalls very many of us, when we often-times at hazard call the good and earnest, vainglorious, or belie, as wrathful, him who sheweth forth a righteous zeal, and in other like ways, by evil surmises, give to good qualities false titles.” S. Basil Reg. brev. Tract. Inter. 273.

as ourselves; or doubt the realities of graces, if found in bodies, or institutions, or people, more or less opposed to ourselves, or readily believe or repeat evil of them; or love not, discern not graces, when mingled with what is distasteful to us; or entertain rivalry; or be dissatisfied with our own measures of grace; or not wish that others "our equals" should be higher in heaven than we, and that God's glory should not be in any way furthered, though we have the lower place; or not reverence the poor of Christ; and, as the bitter root of all, seek we to uproot self-love. Or further still, seek we, by God's grace, to overwhelm and bury the germs of evil by the opposed grace; seek we to love our brethren, not with a common love, but as loving Christ in them, love we and give Him thanks for His graces in them: be we heedful not to speak, I say not against known truth, but not even against such as we may not yet know, against nothing which bears any token of God's truth, which has any impress of it; love we it, be we glad to detect its features, although it comes to us in a form new to us, or through those alienated from us; love we it as a friend, because it is of God, even the Father, Who is "the God of Truth," and the Son, Who is "the Truth," and the Spirit, Who is "the Spirit of Truth;" love we it, because* in it which is "immortal"

* "Whoso loveth not the truth, cannot but be opposed to the whole Trinity." Alvarez T. ii. L. iii. de adept. Virt. P. 2. c. 7. §. 8.

and unchanging and ever is the same, we love Him, from Whom it cometh, Him Who Alone IS, the abiding, unchanging, Ever-blessed Trinity ; and while we love truth without us, love we it in us, and as to us ; learn we to love slights and disparagement, that so others may have truer thoughts of us, think of us more as God knows us. In like way, labour we, through God's grace, to grow in all other graces which are opposed to each trace and shade of deadly sin ; pray we ever for deeper awe, for truer penitence, for loving fear, for fearing love, so shall we in the increase of our inward life have the witness of His Spirit to us that we are not decaying unto death, so shall we after this brief weary struggle enter our everlasting Rest, behold the Everliving Truth, and by His all-pervading love, love Himself in Himself, and all in Him.

Grant, we beseech Thee, merciful Lord, to Thy faithful people pardon and peace, that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve Thee with a quiet mind ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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PRAYERS for UNITY and GUIDANCE into the TRUTH,
COMPILED FROM THE ENGLISH LITURGY.

Burns. 1841.

